

INTERIM REPORT ON THE HEALTH AND SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE RURAL DISTRICT OF DRAYTON FOR THE YEAR 1940.

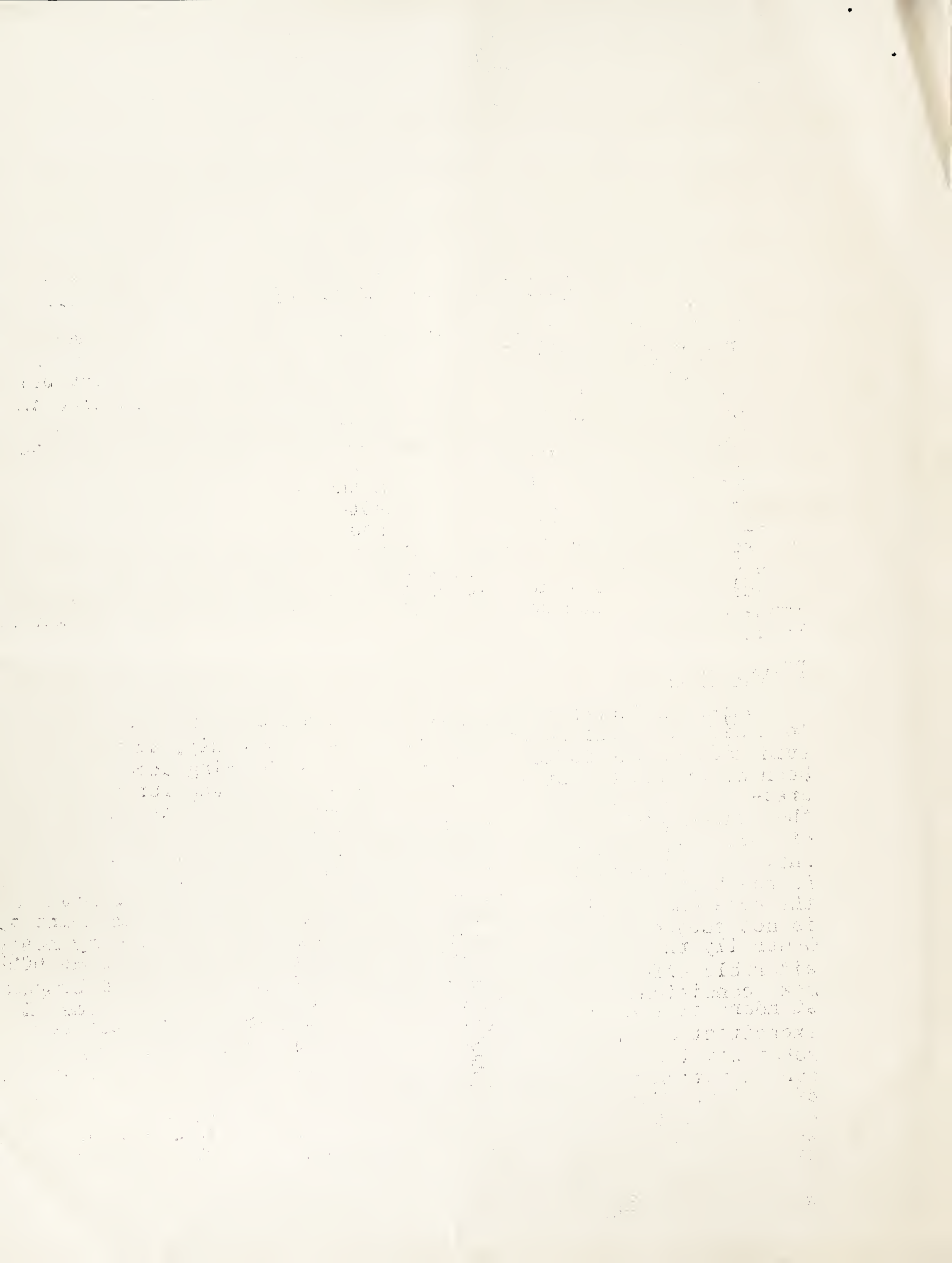
For the second year in succession it has been found necessary to abridge the annual report and to present it in the form of an interim survey of the health of the district. With effort being made to maintain the level of hygiene that had been reached in the latter years of the thirties no advancement on this could be expected except in such cases as where progress would be associated with war-effort. With your Sanitary Inspector required to meet emergency orders as they come from the Ministries, his time has been kept fully occupied, often with matters not directly concerned with local hygiene. Nevertheless, he has found time to give the necessary attention to the maintenance of principal services and such complaints as have arisen have been able to be dealt with expeditiously. I take this opportunity of thanking him for his close collaboration and ready willingness in carrying out the duties of this Office.

POPULATION.

While an increase in population in a rural area does not tend to manifest itself so completely as in a township, there are evidences of the inflow into the Area and housing accommodation has been difficult to obtain. The factors accounting for this increase are:- the rise of military personnel and the persons who accompany them voluntarily, the increased requirements for labour, the demands of which are abundant in the neighbourhood, the rise in agriculture and, in addition, the presence of evacuees from the bombed areas. As has been stated not all incomers have been forced to move into the area and particularly around camps where housing accommodation is not subjected to any control the demands have been very heavy. Generally the householders receiving these guests have made considerable effort to provide homes and have gone to great lengths to make conditions comfortable. While there has been some rise in the standard of rent charged generally, such charges have not been exorbitant and in no case has this been the subject of any substantiated complaint. Taking the increased cost of living into consideration the position reached seems to be based on some degree of equity. While building progress has been stayed it is to be expected that there should be a demand greater than the supply and this has been noticed particularly in the case of agricultural dwellings of the three-bedroomed type.

LABORATORY FACILITIES.

The presence of the war-measure laboratory at Wellington, together with the use of the Harper Adams analytical department for water analyses, provides convenient centres for chemical and bacteriological examinations. Dr. Jones of the Health Laboratory and Dr. Provan have readily given their advice when specialistic knowledge has been required.



AMBULANCE SERVICES.

That cases of infectious disease, where hospitalisation is required, need only be moved comparatively short distances has allowed means to be adopted for transit which would prove inadequate in more urgent conditions. Doubtlessly it will be possible to persevere with the present system until peace conditions return, when a more extensive system of ambulance service will be necessary.

WATER SUPPLIES.

Where a district is dependent for its supply on public and private ownership from bore-hole and shallow well control is difficult and much time must be given to secure a reasonable average standard of purity. That water-borne disease was practically absent from the area and, in the two instances where it did occur, the water was privately owned and giving limited supply, is a matter for congratulation. It is also to be remembered that the Ministry of Health does not consider that chlorination is required in any part of the District. Having this in mind it will be realised that the presence of a water supply of good quality is a great asset in the present emergency. Public supplies, under the control of the Council, are available in the more populous parts. These are under constant supervision and samples are examined at regular intervals. The results have been almost uniformly good.

In the Marchamley area a privately owned supply had given unsatisfactory results in 1939 but steps taken to eliminate surface pollution have proved satisfactory and tests made subsequent to improvements have been satisfactory.

The Sanitary Inspector gives much time to water maintenance and in this connection adequate provision has been made to meet the possibility of damage through enemy action.

SEWERAGE.

There is little to report on this. No development has taken place either by Council or private enterprise. The Sanitary Inspector reports that the Cheswardine system continues to function satisfactorily.

HOUSING.

During the year there have been no additions to the number of houses in the District either by Council, military or private enterprise. As has been stated earlier in the Report there is a demand for houses for the agricultural populace and such schemes as were in contemplation by the Authority are in abeyance. If the present demand is maintained when normal conditions are resumed it would be worthy of consideration of a policy wherein the following points were embodied:-



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an approximation to the standard of the more recently built Council Houses providing main services, and proximity to existing development where the amenities of village life and its social intercourse could be enjoyed. With restrictions on building, only repairs of a minor nature have been able to be put into effect.

MEAT AND FOODS.

The centralisation of slaughtering at Whitchurch has led to a more direct control and the only concern of the Local Authority is the prevention of any illicit killing in the district. While the absence of imported fruits has been keenly felt this has been compensated by the adequate supply of home-grown vegetables. The continuance of the local market allows for the distribution of these home products and the beneficial effects of their vitamin contents is a great asset to the consumers. Inspection has been made from time to time of premises used in the preparation and sale of food-stuffs and the requisite standard of cleanliness has been demanded. Where alterations capable of being carried out under present conditions have been recommended these have been put into effect.

MILK AND DAIRIES.

These are under the constant supervision of the Sanitary Inspector and continued efforts are made to maintain a wholesome supply of milk, not only to the local consumer but also to the factory. While it has been difficult to obtain all the desirable alterations and improvements such steps as could be made to maintain hygiene have been put into force.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

It is now possible to survey the results of a completed year of notification of measles and whooping cough but no conclusions can be reached in this limited period. Possibly the District was freer than ever before from these two diseases as, during the year, six cases of measles and none of whooping cough were brought to notice. As these diseases tend to occur in cycles the absence in one year will doubtlessly be compensated in another.

Infectious disease associated with war conditions were present, but only in the smallest numbers and these were of a mild type. One case of cerebro-spinal fever occurred and there were two mild infections of enteric; this latter disease did not appear to have any connection between the cases and there were no incidents. In a rural area, where it is difficult to secure the same control as in a town, sporadic cases of diphtheria may arise. This disease was more frequent during the current year than in 1939 - seven

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cases being notified. Five of these were treated at the Isolation Hospital. With the intensification of immunisation and the expected rise in the percentage of protection, the number of cases of this disease should be reduced to a low level.

Scarlet Fever approximated in numbers to diphtheria and again five cases were treated in the Hospital. Considering the average mildness of this disease and the frequency of its being allowed to pass un-noticed, the figures given should be considered very satisfactory.

Summarising, the total notifications received during the year were small and below average for a rural district with a considerable population and wide spread in character.

The movement of cases of Tuberculosis from evacuating areas to the district were noticed from time to time but these were in small numbers. Few cases of primary notification occurred.

W. M. J. J. J.

Medical Officer of Health

17.7.41

